United Nations E/CN.18/2007/4/Add.3

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
1 February 2007

Original: English

**United Nations Forum on Forests**
**Seventh session**
New York, 16-27 April 2007
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
**Multi-stakeholder dialogue**

## Discussion paper contributed by the non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples major group

*Summary*

The global forest crisis continues unabated despite more than 10 years of global forest policy dialogue in the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (from 1995 to 1997), in the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (from 1997 to 2000), in the United Nations Forum on Forests (from 2000 onward), and parallel discussions within the framework of legally binding instruments such as the Convention on Biodiversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the International Tropical Timber Agreement. Much of the forest policy dialogue in these forums has been dominated either by a discussion of the need for an international, legally (or non-legally) binding instrument or by preparations to discuss the need for such an instrument (understanding/code), to the detriment of precise and committed government action to halt the crisis. Finally during the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, Governments agreed to develop a non-legally binding instrument and at the current session, the United Nations Forum on Forests may adopt this instrument and multi-year programme of work for the United Nations Forum on Forests and the non-legally binding instrument for 2007-2015.

A number of agreements already exist, which provide sufficient guidance on the steps required to halt the crisis, among others: the expanded work programme on forest biological diversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action, which Governments pledged to implement several years ago, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, and chapter 11 of Agenda 21.

* E/CN.18/2007/10.

07-22785 (E) 130207

Non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations believe that it is necessary to ensure that immediate actions are taken to halt the alarming destruction of forests worldwide and that those actions:

I. Are consistent with international human rights;

II. Recognize, respect and support the implementation of the customary rights of indigenous peoples and local communities that live in and depend on forests;

III. Address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, including the need for the readjustment of financial flows and the reduction of consumption;

IV. Promote genuine community forest governance that empowers forest peoples.

# Contents


| | | *Paragraphs* | *Page* |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | Introduction | 1–3 | 4 |
| II. | Brief assessment of the implementation of relevant Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action | 4–9 | 4 |
| III. | Priority areas for action | 10–12 | 6 |
| IV. | Recommendations and observations | 13–14 | 6 |

# I. Introduction

1. The present discussion paper has been prepared by a coalition of non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations working together in the Global Forest Coalition (GFC). The Coalition (formerly known as the NGO Forest Working Group) was established in 1995 to bring the views of non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations to the various international forest policy forums and negotiations. The Coalition also facilitates the informed participation of non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations in these processes, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other relevant forest policy processes.

2. The global forest crisis continues unabated despite more than 10 years of global forest policy dialogue in the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (from 1995 to 1997), in the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (from 1997 to 2000), in the United Nations Forum on Forests (from 2000 onward), and parallel discussions within the framework of legally binding instruments like the Convention on Biodiversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the International Tropical Timber Agreement. Much of the forest policy dialogue in those forums has been dominated either by a discussion of the need for an international, legally (or non-legally) binding instrument or by preparations to discuss the need for such instrument (understanding/code), to the detriment of precise and committed government action to halt the actual crisis happening to the world's forests and their peoples.

3. Governments are not much closer to implementing precise means to address the crisis than they were 12 years ago; and it remains unclear — the UNFF and its predecessors having failed to reverse the devastating trend — how such an instrument, the contents of which remain undefined, would be successful in addressing the issues that need to be tackled. Finally during the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, Governments agreed to develop a non-legally binding instrument and at the current session, it may adopt this instrument and multi-year programme of work for the United Nations Forum on Forests and the non-legally binding instrument for 2007-2015.

# II. Brief assessment of the implementation of relevant Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action

4. There are numerous Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action relevant to non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations involved in international forest policy negotiations, such as the ones dealing with underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, traditional forest-related knowledge, indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, monitoring, assessment and reporting on implementation of policies and laws related to sustainable forest management, and trade in forest goods and services, to name but a few of the more important issues.

5. Environmental and social non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations were actively involved in implementing some of these proposals for action. For example, during 1997 and 1998, together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), several Governments and many local communities, seven regional workshops on the issue of underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation were organized. In January 1999, two global workshops on this issue were organized: one in Ecuador, exclusively devoted to indigenous peoples' views, and a global workshop involving all interested stakeholders in San José, Costa Rica. This process was set up to implement Intergovernmental Panel on Forests proposal for action 27 (c). As a follow-up to these regional and global events, 15 national workshops, to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, were organized in all continents.

6. Further, non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations contributed with a series of independent monitoring exercises, assessing the level of implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests proposals for action. The results of this exercise were condensed in the 1998 report entitled "Keeping the Promise" presented for consideration by the United Nations Forum on Forests.

7. Additionally, non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations executed a similar independent monitoring process, focused on the implementation of the forest-related clauses of the Convention on Biological Diversity and presented at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in 2002. GFC also prepared a similar exercise to address the implementation of forest-related obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and presented it at the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Montreal in November 2005.

8. Non-governmental organizations believe that the involvement of non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations in the implementation of some Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action was constructive and encouraging, as those proposals undertaken with the involvement of non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations were the only ones so far fully implemented at the global level.

9. Non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations remain engaged in forums that offer participation opportunities and effective representation of civil society's views. However, there are serious constraints that hinder the desired modalities and ability of groups to participate and contribute substantially to those processes: inadequate financial provisions and restraining participation and accreditation rules within the realm of the Economic and Social Council, to name but a few, discourage many interested non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations. Multi-stakeholder dialogues organized on the basis of modalities proposed by the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests have been seen by non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations and other major groups as a way to segregate the input provided by those stakeholders. The proposals emanating from the non-governmental organization and indigenous peoples' organization perspective encompassed a more dynamic set-up for dialogue which included at its core an attempt to report and

debate issues related to implementation rather than the endless monologues in which the Forum had engaged owing to lack of reporting commitments. Moreover, the results of those dialogues were never included in the Secretary-General's reports. Most non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations involved in the international forest policy debate think that multi-stakeholder dialogues are inappropriate vehicles through which to channel civil society's views. Unless radical changes occur which effectively implement the proposals and views of major groups, the organization of these events is discouraged.

## III. Priority areas for action

10. The main constraints blocking effective action are undoubtedly the overwhelming superiority of vested interests controlling forest resources and the equally grave lack of political will manifest in governmental attitudes towards forest conservation and sustainable use, and an increasing trend to rely on the market to provide solutions when in fact that is where many of the problems originate. The solution to the forest crisis should start with the implementation of existing commitments. In the past, non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations had expressed their fears that the negotiation of a forest convention could easily mean another lost decade without decisive action to stop and reverse forest loss. A new non-legally binding instrument will not contribute anything to the current situation unless it explicitly addresses the following underlying causes of forest loss: lack of recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, unsustainable consumption and production patterns and unsustainable financial and timber trade flows.

11. Non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations are also deeply concerned about the lack of action by key actors, including Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector, among others, to curb the alarming rate of deforestation and forest degradation currently occurring. In addition to the need for emphasis on deforestation and forest degradation, another key area of concern for the sector is the lack of recognition of indigenous peoples and local communities that live in and depend on forests. Without the full recognition of these rights and the implementation of corrective measures at all levels, any attempt to achieve sustainable forest management would be futile.

12. Thus, the only proposals for action that would receive any support from most of the major groups are those directly devised to solve these issues.

## IV. Recommendations and observations

13. **Non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations believe that it is necessary to ensure that immediate actions to solve the alarming destruction of forests worldwide are taken and that those actions:**

- **Are consistent with international human rights**
- **Recognize, respect and support the implementation of the customary rights of indigenous peoples and local communities that live in and depend on forests**

- **Address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, including the need for readjustment of financial flows and the reduction of consumption**
- **Promote genuine community forest governance that empowers forest peoples.**

14. **In addition, the following observations about the proposed non-legally binding instrument should be taken into consideration:**

- **The instrument is an instrument that is far removed from the forest principles and from Agenda 21**
- **The instrument is ambiguous and weak regarding the rights of forest-dependent people**
- **The instrument lost its strength, especially during the experts meeting because the experts started to negotiate the text instead of contributing to improve and strengthen it technically and scientifically. For example, the text totally ignores forest-related traditional knowledge**
- **The World Summit on Sustainable Development reaffirms that indigenous peoples have a vital role to play in sustainable development. However, the instrument does not even mention that in its preamble; at the very least that recognition should be given to indigenous peoples**
- **There are concerns that the instrument overly stresses the rights of unspecified others and discusses other stakeholders without identifying them, while Agenda 21 clearly identifies who the major groups are**
- **The ambiguity of the instrument derives from Governments stating that they agree with the major groups but only in accordance with national legislation and only where there is no conflict with this legislation**
- **The instrument is based on the commercial aspects of forests but indigenous peoples are asking where the cultural and spiritual aspect is that is very important for the indigenous and local communities**
- **The instrument does not take seriously benefit sharing in relation to forest-dependent communities**
- **The instrument promotes the new landholders and invaders of indigenous lands by establishing a financial mechanism for small holders and land users only**
- **The instrument does not establish a financial mechanism that is accessible to indigenous and local communities.**

United Nations E/CN.18/2007/4/Add.4

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 February 2007

Original: English

**United Nations Forum on Forests**
**Seventh session**
New York, 16-27 April 2007
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
**Multi-stakeholder dialogue**

## Discussion paper contributed by the scientific and technological communities major group**

*Summary*

The present discussion paper is a contribution by two networks of forestry research institutions in Africa and Asia, in consultation with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

The paper:

(a) Briefly describes the networks, which provided the materials for the development of the paper;

(b) Assesses priority areas for action, with a focus on the most pressing issues which need urgent action, and on how future international arrangements could better address them;

(c) Assesses how the United Nations Forum on Forests process contributes to and influences the discussion of issues of priority for the scientific and technological communities major group, focusing on the global, regional and subregional activities and programmes directly or indirectly contributing to the guiding principles of the Forum on Forests;

(d) Recommends a number of science and technology-related elements for the non-legally binding instrument on forests;

* E/CN.18/2007/1.

** The present discussion paper is a contribution by the scientific and technological communities major group to the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. It has been prepared on the basis of information gathered by the Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions, in collaboration with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

07-22793 (E) 090207

(e) Recommends modalities for the multi-year programme of work;

(f) Provides concluding remarks and a summary of major recommendations for the effective contribution of science-policy linkages to sustainable forest management.

# Contents


| | | *Paragraphs* | *Page* |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | Introduction | 1–4 | 4 |
| II. | Priority areas for action | 5–11 | 4 |
| | A. Enhancing the interface of forest science and forest policy | 6–7 | 5 |
| | B. Enhancing the transformation of research results into usable information and technologies and facilitating their greater extension and adoption | 8 | 5 |
| | C. Coordinating and streamlining national, subregional and regional development priorities with internationally agreed global objectives on forests | 9–10 | 6 |
| | D. Mobilization of adequate funding for forestry research, education and extension | 11 | 7 |
| III. | Brief assessment of how the United Nations Forum on Forests process has addressed issues of priority for the scientific and technological communities major group | 12–27 | 7 |
| | A. Enhanced interaction between science and policy | 15–19 | 8 |
| | B. Initiatives to promote the efficient sharing of information and to strengthen networks | 20–22 | 9 |
| | C. Further implementation of international arrangements of forests | 23–24 | 9 |
| | D. Strengthened regional and subregional collaboration between countries | 25–27 | 9 |
| IV. | Recommendations for non-legally binding instrument on forests | 28–31 | 11 |
| V. | Recommendations for the multi-year programme of work | 32–34 | 12 |
| VI. | Conclusions and recommendations | 35 | 13 |

# I. Introduction

1. The present discussion paper is a contribution prepared by the Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA) and the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI) on behalf of the scientific and technological communities major group, to the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. It benefited from review comments by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

2. FORNESSA is a federation of three subregional forestry research networks: the Association of Forestry Research Institutions in Eastern Africa; the Forestry and Agro-forestry Research Network of the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development; and the Forestry Research and Training Unit of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate within the Southern African Development Community secretariat. Its goal is to strengthen forestry research in sub-Saharan Africa to ensure a greater impact on the management and conservation of forest and tree resources for sustainable development.

3. APAFRI is a non-governmental organization with over 60 members. Most of the national forest research institutions, and many of the forestry schools, in Asia and the Pacific which are actively engaged in forestry and forest-related research are members of APAFRI. Its vision is to be recognized as a dynamic, strong and self-reliant forestry research association in Asia and the Pacific which promotes innovative research and development efforts in support of national, regional and community developments. APAFRI is also a chapter of IUFRO, and has collaborated in various activities with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Tropical Timber Organization, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, the United States Department of Agriculture and other regional and international agencies.

4. The paper assesses (a) the most pressing science and technology-related issues that need to be urgently addressed in order to enhance sustainable forest management and meet the four global objectives on forests agreed upon during the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests; and (b) how the United Nations Forum on Forests process has contributed to a wider understanding of those issues and helped to address them. The paper also makes recommendations for a comprehensive and more effective non-legally binding instrument on all types of forest, and also for enhancing the organization of the work of the Forum on Forests from the present until 2015.

# II. Priority areas for action

5. This section assesses the most pressing science and technology-related problems that need urgent attention in order to enhance sustainable forest management and meet the four agreed global objectives on forests. It also suggests ways the United Nations Forum on Forests could address those problems.

## A. Enhancing the interface of forest science and forest policy

6. The scientific and technological communities major group would like to emphasize that enhancing the science-policy interface is key to sustainable forest management and to the successful implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and to the implementation of the various resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, as well as the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and the four global objectives agreed and negotiated during the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

7. Consequently, the scientific and technological communities major group wishes to see more concerted efforts and commitment by Governments, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional networks, and relevant multilateral environmental agreements, instruments, processes and bodies of the United Nations system, to recognize and strengthen the research-policy linkage by:

(a) Increasing support for sound scientific knowledge generation, and the development and adaptation of forest technologies;

(b) Improving information access, and enhancing the sharing and exchange of experiences and knowledge, including traditional knowledge and good practices in forest resources utilization, conservation and management;

(c) Strengthening forestry education and training, as well as research and development;

(d) Strengthening the capacity of scientists and research organizations from developing countries to participate effectively in joint initiatives and activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in science and technology in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests and other international forest forums and processes;

(e) Promoting appropriate mechanisms for greater participation of forest stakeholder groups, including the scientific community, the private sector and civil society organizations, in the formulation and implementation of forest policies and best practices, and of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

## B. Enhancing the transformation of research results into usable information and technologies and facilitating their greater extension and adoption

8. The second key priority area for action for the scientific and technological communities major group relates to transforming research results into usable information and technologies which could increase the impact of sound scientific information on forest policy and the sustainable management of forests for greater value to society and wealth creation. It is one thing to generate scientific information but it is another thing altogether to transform research findings into usable knowledge and technologies and place those technologies in the hands of policymakers and other forest stakeholders. If forests and other related natural

resources are to be saved, they must be highly valued by forest stakeholders, including forest-dependent communities, landowners, forest practitioners and policy decision makers. That is even more important in developing countries, where the fight for sustainable forest management is most often undertaken against the background of a pressing need for economic development, external debt repayment, and improvement in human development indices. The scientific and technological communities major group recognizes that research needs to demonstrate even more clearly the usefulness of forests and forest resources and communicate research findings appropriately and effectively to end-users in more convincing ways. To that end, United Nations Forum on Forests actions in the following directions could be extremely helpful:

(a) Organization of training workshops on how to plan, conduct and organize research activities so that research results can be transformed more readily into usable problem-solving and policymaking instruments;

(b) Organization of communication and interaction programmes (extension services) for a better flow of scientific information among researchers, policymakers and forest practitioners and managers;

(c) Development of mechanisms to better associate as many as possible relevant stakeholders in research-policy formulation and implementation processes to avoid conflicts and antagonism between the State forestry apparatus and the citizenry, and to improve good governance, transparency and accountability in the forest sector.

## C. Coordinating and streamlining national, subregional and regional development priorities with internationally agreed global objectives on forests

9. Another key priority area for action for the scientific and technological communities major group is how to harmonize national, subregional and regional priorities and strategies with internationally agreed global objectives and resolutions. That is a challenging area, as national priorities and strategies are not always in line with global objectives, which tend to be more in favour of conservation than utilization. The key to achieving such harmonization is to avoid setting conservation against utilization, in favour of the concept of sustainable conservation and utilization of forests and forest resources, which aims to achieve a balance between conservation and use of resources.

10. To that end, the United Nations Forum on Forests could endeavour to:

(a) Develop a programme of action, aimed at demonstrating clearly the opportunities embedded in the different forest-related conventions and agreements for developing countries to implement them more easily. Outstanding examples of these are the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the clean development mechanism whose opportunities for developing countries that fully implement them are not always well understood;

(b) Encourage national, subregional and regional collaboration in the pursuit of projects of common interest and the pooling of resources and capacities to that

end, in partnership with international institutions and Collaborative Partnership on Forests member organizations.

### D. Mobilization of adequate funding for forestry research, education and extension

11. A fourth important priority area for action is the mobilization of adequate funding for forest research, education and extension, especially and most urgently in developing countries. Indeed, most reports from sub-Saharan African countries on poor progress in the implementation of international conventions and arrangements on forests, such as the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, have indicated that a persistent lack of funding lies at the heart of the lack of progress. Africa is a continent defined by poverty. Its richness, based on the relative abundance of its natural resources, will remain unrealized as long as economic, social and environmental benefits are not derived from them to improve the livelihood of its large forest-dependent populations. The continent is home to over 50 per cent of the highly indebted poor countries of the world. How can they enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people, if they lack the capital base necessary to initiate and sustain livelihood-improvement programmes and policies? How can they reverse substantively the loss of forest cover through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation, if the necessary funding is not available on a sustainable basis over a long enough period? Far-reaching actions and initiatives to promote sustainable forest management require substantial and long-term investments. To achieve that, efforts by the United Nations Forum on Forests and the international community could be helpful in:

(a) Seriously looking for ways to reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilizing significant, and increased, new and additional financing from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management, as clearly stated in the fourth global objective agreed during the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests;

(b) Giving serious thought to the conventional project-based approach used to achieve conservation impacts and livelihood improvement. Project-based interventions are limited in time, space and number of beneficiaries, while most forest cover loss is the result of the land- and resource-use practices of large numbers of people distributed over large areas and acting over a long period of time. A paradigm shift from using short-term instruments to using non-project models in addressing long-term problems is urgently needed.

## III. Brief assessment of how the United Nations Forum on Forests process has addressed issues of priority for the scientific and technological communities major group

12. The Secretary-General's report for the fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests on forest-related scientific knowledge observed that progress in

the area had been made at the international level, but the degree of interaction and the extent to which forest-related scientific knowledge was used for policymaking varied considerably among countries and tended to be low, in particular in developing countries. The observation remains largely valid today.

13. Indeed, at the global level, in line with the United Nations Forum on Forests process and its recommendations, several innovative initiatives have been established in recent years to facilitate communication among scientists, policymakers and other stakeholders with a view to improving science-policy interaction. Such initiatives include: (a) intergovernmental forums and subsidiary advisory bodies; (b) task-oriented expert groups set up by forest-related global conventions, instruments and organizations; (c) the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; (d) multi-stakeholder dialogues; and (e) increased cooperation among the scientific community and international organizations, leading to key informative publications, such as the FAO *State of the World's Forests* report, and the International Tropical Timber Organization criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

14. Likewise, at the regional and subregional levels, many regional and international organizations and agencies have launched and implemented various initiatives, which directly or indirectly address the issues of generating, disseminating and utilizing forest-related knowledge, as illustrated by the examples set out below.

## A. Enhanced interaction between science and policy

15. The IUFRO Task Force on the Forest Science-Policy Interface has produced guidelines for research organizations and research scientists, providing best practices for the interaction between the science community and policymakers.

16. The IUFRO Special Programme for Developing Countries has also initiated a training module for forest scientists on international forest-related initiatives and agreements and their implementation in the context of national forest programmes which links research and science with practice.

17. The IUFRO Task Force on Public Relations in Forest Science has produced a public relations manual that will be used in another new IUFRO Special Programme for Developing Countries training module to be entitled "Communicating forest research — Making science work for policy and management".

18. The IUFRO Special Project on world forests, society and environment compiled a book on forests in the global balance and a policy brief which was discussed at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

19. The Centre for International Forestry Research has carried out work on forests and governance and recently launched an initiative entitled the "Rights and resources initiative", in partnership with the World Conservation Union, the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry and a number of non-governmental organizations.

## B. Initiatives to promote the efficient sharing of information and to strengthen networks

20. IUFRO has established the Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) as a Collaborative Partnership on Forests initiative. The service is operated by IUFRO, FAO, the Centre for International Forestry Research and other national and international forestry expert institutions. The GFIS Africa project has established five GFIS service centres strategically located throughout the ecological zones of the continent, while in Asia, the GFIS project is being developed with the active participation of such regional networks as APAFRI.

21. CIFOR has established a carbon forestry website to serve the communities working on land use, land use change and forestry activities and the associated climate change.

22. IUFRO and other partners such as the International Foundation of Sciences and the Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa, have organized periodic training courses in research management, proposal preparation and information management, to strengthen capacity for research and for the mobilization of funding for research.

## C. Further implementation of international arrangements on forests

23. The FAO regional forestry commissions, the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission and the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission have played a positive role. They recommended that member countries take further actions to implement internationally agreed action related to forests, especially the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, and institute programmes to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They further recommended that FAO help to convene regional meetings for member countries to exchange experiences in working towards sustainable forest management, including successes and impediments, and make useful recommendations to the Committee on Forests and the United Nations Forum on Forests.

24. Those Commissions also recommended that member countries actively participate and provide forestry expertise in intergovernmental negotiations related to forests, especially as regards the United Nations Forum on Forests and the conventions on biodiversity, desertification and climate change.

## D. Strengthened regional and subregional collaboration between countries

25. A number of regional and subregional partnership initiatives emerged in recent years to create platforms for coordination and consultation between countries and donor agencies and development partner countries. The New Partnership for Africa's Development is one example at the regional level, while the Conférence sur les écosystemes de forêts denses humides d'Afrique centrale, born out of the Brazzaville Process, and the conférence des ministres en charge des forêts d'Afrique centrale, formed following the 1999 summit, held in Yaoundé, and which

contributes to the harmonization of national forest policies and actions, are but two outstanding examples at subregional level in the Congo Basin, the second largest contiguous tract of tropical forest in the world. In Asia and the Pacific, the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme, with the participation of 14 Asian and Pacific nations, has achieved much progress in sharing information and exchanging experiences in the conservation and management of forest genetic resources. The programme, initiated by APAFRI and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (recently renamed Bioversity International) has been further boosted by funding from the International Tropical Timber Organization for a subprogramme covering seven out of its 14 participating countries. Other notable examples from Asia and the Pacific include the various programmes on poverty reduction and community forestry initiated by regional organizations such as the Asia Forest Partnership and the Asia Forest Network. Increasingly, the secretariat of the Pacific Community has assisted many Pacific island nations to participate effectively in regional and international forums by mobilizing resources and building capacity.

26. Regional and subregional forest information promotion initiatives and research networks have been established to strengthen research capacities and to promote collaboration and the efficient provision and sharing of relevant information, with the overall goal of strengthening science-policy interaction for sustainable forest management. The Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa, the African Forestry Research Network, the Biodiversity International forest genetic resources network, in Africa; and the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme established by Biodiversity International and APAFRI and currently hosted by APAFRI, in Asia and the Pacific, are but a few examples of regional forest research-related networks. The Association of Forestry Research Institutions in Eastern Africa, the Forestry and Agro-forestry Research Network of the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (in West and Central Africa), and the Forestry Research and Training Unit of the Southern African Development Community, are outstanding examples of subregional forest research networks. The GFIS Africa Project initiated by IUFRO, which is contributing to enhancing access to and provision of quality forest-related information, especially information available through electronic media, is another outstanding initiative with five well-established eco-regional information centres strategically located throughout Africa. APAFRI, assisted by CIFOR, is in the initial stages of developing GFIS Asia.

27. At the national level, a number of initiatives have been emerging in recent years, mainly through partnership with the National Forestry Programme Facility hosted by FAO. Indeed, in line with United Nations Forum on Forests recommendations to encourage increased multi-stakeholder participation in sustainable forest management, the National Forestry Programme Facility has successfully mobilized the participation of civil society organizations and local communities and individuals in forest policy formulation and implementation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In Ghana, for example, through the partnership with the National Forestry Programme Facility, forest forums are being established enthusiastically in each of the 10 administrative regions of the country. The main objective of the forums is to allow the National Forestry Commission to cast its net wider in seeking relevant information for forest policy formulation and implementation. Likewise, in Nigeria, through partnership with the National Forestry Programme Facility, five studies of the ecological zones of the country are

currently under way. The main purpose of the partnership established between Nigeria and the National Forest Programme Facility is to strengthen the participation of local people and communities in sustainable forest management, and promote community-based forest management as a policy strategy to achieve sustainable forest management. Similar actions are being undertaken in Asia and Latin America.

## IV. Recommendations for non-legally binding instruments on forests

28. Science and technology constitute a major asset which when properly developed and utilized can play a vital role in the formulation and implementation of forest policy for sustainable forest management. That has already been recognized both by Agenda 21 (chapters 31 and 35) and by the United Nations Forum on Forests, including through the inclusion of forest-related scientific knowledge in the agenda of a number of its previous sessions.

29. However, future international agreements and arrangements need to go beyond recognizing the importance of science and technology, and seriously consider ways to enhance the interface between science and policy, to support the greater extension and adoption of research results, to facilitate research capacity-building and to mobilize funding for research in order to unlock the potential for scientific information and appropriate technologies to contribute to sustainable development. The following suggestions are ways for future international arrangements on forests to better address those urgent proposals:

(a) Joint initiatives on science and technology should be supported to strengthen the contribution of research to more informed decision-making at the global level;

(b) The application of scientific and technological innovations, as well as traditional forest-related knowledge, should be supported to help indigenous and local communities undertake sustainable forest management;

(c) Innovative ways should be found to reduce the debt burden of developing countries so as to channel funds into the sustainable management of natural resources including scientific knowledge development as a viable way of supporting the process;

(d) Donor interest in collaborative initiatives should be increased, which could help advance implementation of the urgent proposals through effective flows of information at all levels of decision-making, especially to increase the awareness of policymakers, landowners, communities and representatives outside the forest sector.

30. The scientific and technological communities major group wishes to stress that for the proposed non-legally binding instrument on forests to be comprehensive and effective, it should also address the following additional issues, which are equally important for the science-policy interface, especially in developing countries:

(a) Supporting and improving training programmes in developing countries so that emerging issues and challenges, such as conflict resolution, dialogue between forest stakeholders, including dialogue between forest scientists,

administrators and donors, intersectoral linkages and participatory approaches to address sustainability issues, can be properly addressed;

(b) Supporting and promoting dynamic networking and collaboration between subregional, regional and international forestry training and research institutions as a powerful way to mitigate not only capacity constraints, but also unproductive competition for financial resources, which does not always allow for the best use of resources, and to obtain far-reaching results in addressing global problems of a subregional, regional and international nature;

(c) Empowering and building capacity of local people, communities and authorities to effectively participate in sustainable forest management and perform the new and challenging roles they have to play in the decentralization process gaining momentum in the developing world.

31. Indeed, if research capacities are strengthened and funds for forest research mobilized adequately, then there will be a greater chance to address effectively and in a timely fashion the knowledge gaps and set research priorities. In turn, that will contribute to improving linkages between science and policy processes; promoting the efficient sharing of information and strengthening of networks; and applying participatory mechanisms to integrate research into planning processes.

## V. Recommendations for the multi-year programme of work

32. The scientific and technological communities major group supports the decision of the sixth session of United Nations Forum on Forests that, following its seventh session in 2007, the Forum shall meet biennially for a period of up to two weeks. Furthermore, the scientific and technological communities major group wishes to propose that:

(a) During each session, time slots be allocated for specific thematic panel discussions or dialogues of multinational interest on issues of major concern to the Forum, in order to share and exchange existing information, including traditional forest-related knowledge, and to identify knowledge gaps and additional information needs;

(b) During each session, time slots also be allocated for addressing cross-cutting issues, such as funding for implementing elements of the non-legally binding instrument;

(c) During the years when the United Nations Forum on Forests does not meet, regional events be organized to address region-specific issues with global impacts, or lessons learned from the regional implementation of international initiatives; the scientific community should be invited to contribute to those regional events.

33. Bearing in mind that other international agencies, such as FAO, have regional offices or commissions that organize regular regional events, events during the intersessional years could best be organized in conjunction with those regional offices or commissions. That would avoid undesirable duplication and diluting scarce resources, which often results in unfocused, inconclusive and at times disastrous outcomes.

34. Finally, the scientific and technological communities major group would like to suggest that:

(a) **The multi-year programme of work focus on a limited number of practical and concrete activities in line with the constraints limiting progress towards sustainable forest management in general and the achievement of the four global objectives defined for the non-legally binding instrument;**

(b) **For each of the activities identified, practical modalities for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation be carefully defined in order to facilitate assessment of progress and impacts.**

# VI. Conclusions and recommendations

35. Achieving sustainable management of the world's forests and forest resources is certainly one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. If the international community holds that truth to be self-evident, then courageous action should be taken as a result, including bringing scientific and technological knowledge to bear to face the challenge. The international community should consider drastic recommendations, including putting real power and commitment behind the proposed elements of the non-legally binding instrument in order to facilitate their implementation. With regard to the proposals for action related to science and technology, it is recommended that:

(a) **A commitment be made to investing in strengthening forest research capacities and supporting research networks and activities, in particular in economically disadvantaged countries, so that science and research can make a difference to real-life problems through the timely delivery of utilizable science-based solutions;**

(b) **Appropriate support from Governments and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other international organizations be mobilized to assist regional and subregional forest research networks involved in building forest research capacities, improving communications, information-sharing and networking among forest scientists, research institutions, universities, policymakers, local communities and other stakeholders in the forest sector and other land-based sectors.**

United Nations E/CN.18/2007/4/Add.5

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 February 2007

Original: English

**United Nations Forum on Forests**
**Seventh session**
New York, 16-27 April 2007
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
**Multi-stakeholder dialogue**

## Discussion paper contributed by the women major group**

*Summary*

Current low levels of participation by women in forest management decision-making and governance are issues of major concern to the women major group. Obstacles and constraints faced by women include: degraded environments and poverty; low levels of awareness among policymakers and administrators of how gender issues affect forest management; limited numbers of women in decision-making roles; limited implementation of policies and legislation for gender equity and the inclusion of women; and insufficient female staff, mentors and networks in forestry institutions. More strategic concerted efforts and commitment by all actors engaged in sustainable forest management are needed to strengthen women's role in the processes and implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forest of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

In order to promote the adoption of action-oriented policy decisions for the non-legally binding instrument through 2015, the women major group proposes specific recommendations and activities as priority areas for action. They include initiatives for research, training, advocacy, policy inputs for gender mainstreaming, pilot projects that demonstrate collaboration between Governments and the women major group and media presentations showcasing successful initiatives.

* E/CN.18/2007/2.

** Prepared by the Network for Women in Natural Resources Management.

07-22820 (E) 140207

# Contents


| | | *Paragraphs* | *Page* |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | Introduction | 1–4 | 3 |
| II. | Obstacles and constraints | 5–13 | 4 |
| III. | Plans and proposed actions | 14–25 | 5 |
| IV. | General recommendations for women in sustainable forest management | 26 | 8 |

# I. Introduction

1. In response to the non-legally binding instrument agreed to by Member States, and in support of the four global objectives on forests, the women major group would like to reiterate that the goals and objectives cannot be met without women's active engagement and leadership. Women are an integral part of implementation and their participation in the process is required to ensure ownership of the outcomes and effective action; women leaders have an important role to play in creating focused priorities for future action. As stressed by Ms. Daniela Simioni of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, at the meeting of the open-ended ad hoc expert group in New York, in December 2006, any new international instrument for sustainable forest management should consider the gender aspect, including household needs for wood fuel, employment and income opportunities for women and their involvement in reforestation and other conservation activities.

2. Over the past several years, the women major group has compiled priority areas for action and proposed achievable goals and targets in discussion papers submitted to the third, fourth and fifth sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. In preparation for the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the women major group has obtained the perspectives of women engaged in forest-related work at the community, national and international levels through a list of questions on obstacles and opportunities. Based on inputs received from Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, the World Conservation Union (Eastern Africa), the gender and forestry research group of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the Centre for International Forest Research, and women in Nepal and South Africa, the women major group would like to re-emphasize the critical importance of women's contributions to the implementation of the proposal for actions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests; and to implementing the various resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests; as well as to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and the four global objectives agreed to and negotiated during the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

3. To date, the women major group has been successful in ensuring that the experiences and concerns of women have been voiced and discussed at the United Nations Forum on Forests formal sessions and expert meetings to raise awareness of the barriers faced by women foresters, forestry students and community members and to describe successful initiatives that have achieved sustainable forest management and women's empowerment. They have all pointed to the need for structural changes within forestry organizations to address gender equality.

4. Specifically, the women major group is of the opinion that current levels of participation by women in forest management decision-making and governance are issues of major concern, and would like to see more strategic concerted efforts and commitment by Governments, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional networks, as well as relevant multilateral environmental agreements, instruments, processes and bodies of the United Nations system to strengthen women's role in such processes. The active engagement of women is imperative to ensure that the discussions at the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests include women's perspectives and concerns.

# II. Obstacles and constraints

5. The following obstacles and constraints to women's involvement in sustainable forest management have been identified, based on responses to the following questions: (a) what is the current situation of gender equity in your country in reference to forest management? Are women well represented in decision-making roles in community-level forest groups and in forestry institutions? Do women influence forest-related policies? and (b) what are the constraints to women's involvement in forest management at the community and institutional levels?

## A. Degraded environments and poverty

6. The continuing degradation and pollution of the environment have far-reaching effects on the livelihoods of communities, particularly of indigenous women and women living in poverty. Gender inequality, environmental deterioration, poor health and poverty are self-reinforcing. Forest protection and conservation measures often add to the hardships of poor women by denying them access to the forest products they need for, inter alia, energy, food, medicine and livestock feed, while providing no alternatives for them to meet their families' basic needs, thus perpetuating the poverty cycle.

## B. Lack of awareness

7. There is a lack of awareness of how gender issues affect forest management; while many policy recommendations link gender to the environment, development agencies and government departments have tended to overlook the roles of women in forestry and their effects on poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

## C. Few women in decision-making roles

8. The number of women in leadership positions in forestry institutions, especially at the international level, remains marginal; further, the marginalization of women in decisions on the governance of forest resources has resulted in their increased levels of poverty and hardship for those at the consumption end of the scale with limited options. Women who do attain positions of responsibility are often disempowered by male actors, often influencing them to leave the forest sector.

## D. Policies and legislation for gender equity and women's inclusion

9. Despite the progress made in policies for gender equality over the last 20 years, implementation and action have been limited. Women influence policies only in significant ways when their participation and opinions are actively sought by policymakers. Within government policymaking, that is often done when funds and human resources so permit but, in general, the gender dimension is not actively or adequately considered. There is a serious lack of political commitment on the part of forestry authorities to monitor and evaluate implementation of gender-responsive

actions, which is of major concern as remedial action does not take gender dynamics sufficiently into account.

### E. Insufficient personnel, mentors and networks

10. The number of women in forestry institutions is, to date, very low in most countries. There are many social and cultural reasons for that, and some Governments are attempting to counteract those causes through innovative recruitment, hiring and retention procedures. Still, women in such organizations are often marginalized and without networks and mentors that could strengthen their capacities and influence.

11. Major concerns and challenges faced by the women major group include:

(a) Insufficient commitment to issues of gender equality among environment-related institutions and donor agencies;

(b) Inadequate data and indicators for gender-related aspects of forestry policies and programmes;

(c) Paucity of women in forestry institutions to represent the interests of women within global-level processes;

(d) Lack of capacities within forestry institutions to design gender-responsive strategies.

12. To take on those concerns and challenges, the women major group wishes to suggest additional areas of need and concerted actions at the national, regional and international levels:

(a) Policy and legislation;

(b) Capacity-building for gender mainstreaming;

(c) Sustainable development activities for women in forest management;

(d) Research;

(e) Organizational change;

(f) Gender rights-based international cooperation in forestry;

(g) Recruitment of women in international forestry institutions.

13. The next phase of the non-legally binding instrument now requires that more significant attention and resources be devoted to gender issues and women's needs and contributions related to sustainable forest management, poverty alleviation and related topics such as health, so that such changes can be implemented. Towards that goal, the women major group offers cooperation, skills, knowledge and networks of women throughout the world to forge new paths by engaging women as equal partners in sustainable forest management.

## III. Plans and proposed actions

14. To promote the adoption of action-oriented policy decisions for the non-legally binding instrument through 2015, the women major group hereby proposes

recommendations and activities as priority areas for action, based on responses to two questions posed to women in forestry: (a) how can the constraints be overcome by opening up spaces for women and through attention to gender equity in institutions and implementation? and (b) how can we ensure equitable practices in forestry institutions, considering aspects of organizational structure and culture?

## A. Research for change

15. A recent meeting of women forestry professionals of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations working group on gender and forestry research endorsed a plan to assist the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to extend the research already completed by FAO on gender and forestry in Europe and North America[1] to other regions, including anglophone and francophone Africa and Asia. The group has proposed a project that aims to analyse current knowledge and information gaps regarding gender roles, responsibilities, access to and control over resources, challenges and opportunities among selected communities and professional organizations in Asian and African tropical forests; propose actions that promote gender-sensitive development among selected communities; and document best practices or successful cases of promoting gender-sensitive programmes in forestry. In relation to the forestry profession, the study will also document the current knowledge and information gaps of gender representation in forestry institutions in selected Asian and African countries; analyse key challenges to the present status; recommend actions for improving gender balance; and disseminate information. Specific outputs will include recommendations for improved inclusion of women in forest management and poverty reduction programmes and a framework for the creation of local, regional, national and international networks of women in forestry.

16. Small amounts of funding have been provided to coordinators in Cameroon and Ghana to complete the joint research initiative of FAO/International Union of Forest Research Organizations/Centre for International Forest Research entitled "Mainstreaming gender issues in forestry in Africa". Ten countries, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, have been selected. Additional funds are now required to complete the work in Asia and to hold an international meeting to share results and recommendations.

17. The women major group will collaborate with those organizations and individuals to engage its network of women forestry professionals and bring research results to the attention of Member States of the United Nations Forum on Forests at a formal session or informal side event sometime in 2007 or 2008.

[1] *Time for action: Changing the gender situation in forestry*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Rome, 2006).

## B. Coordination of side events at Government-led initiatives, regional meetings and sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests

18. The women major group will coordinate various side events and meetings in conjunction with other major groups at the Government-led initiatives, regional meetings and regular sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, and in collaboration with other organizations working on gender and forestry issues, such as the Centre for International Forest Research, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the African Forestry Forum, partners of Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management and others. They will focus on raising awareness of women and gender-related issues and discussions of how to integrate such issue areas into the objectives of the non-legally binding instrument.

## C. Coordination of women participants at the World Forestry Congress

19. The women major group and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations working group on gender and forestry research have proposed to the FAO organizers the themes of gender and forests or women, men and forest livelihoods for the thirteenth World Forestry Congress, to be held in Buenos Aires in 2009. The women major group will assure the maximum participation of women at the event; funds from member States and strategic partners are needed for that purpose.

## D. Coordination of women in sustainable forest management at the Commission on Sustainable Development

20. The Commission on Sustainable Development will review forest management and biodiversity in 2012 and 2013, including aspects of poverty eradication and gender equality. The women major group will initiate planning for that significant global event in 2010 to assure maximum participation and impact by women; funds from member States and strategic partners are needed for that purpose.

## E. Contribution of expertise as a major group member of the Committee of Experts

21. As proposed at the expert group meeting of December 2006, expertise can be contributed to promote and facilitate the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument.

## F. Enhanced collaboration and partnership between government and civil society to mainstream gender in forestry in specific countries

22. Some countries, such as Nepal, have achieved exemplary performances in project implementation through the effective collaboration between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies to achieve

maximum participation of women and other deprived groups of forest users in national forestry development programmes. The Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation of Nepal collaborated with a national NGO specializing in gender and forestry development to bridge the gender gap by training and mentoring rural and professional women as group promoters and gender focal persons from livestock and forestry departments. That led to a policy shift and the Ministry developed a national strategy for gender mainstreaming action plans until 2015.

23. As an activity of the women major group, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management proposes to build on that unique effort and to strengthen linkages with the Ministry in Nepal by establishing a formal relationship for at least the next three years, to assess the effectiveness of an NGO/Government partnership strategy; identify gaps in the Ministry's efforts in gender mainstreaming in programmes and organizational aspects; and make recommendations.

24. The outcome of the partnership will be a multimedia presentation that highlights the added value of gender mainstreaming to the sustainable forest management work of government forestry and related sector agencies. It will be presented at a session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and distributed to Member States of the United Nations Forum on Forests in the form of a CD-ROM.

25. Similar partnerships between the women major group and the Governments of South Africa and the Philippines are under discussion.

## IV. General recommendations for women in sustainable forest management

26. **In addition to those specific plans for implementation of the non-legally binding instrument, the women major group would like to make the following general recommendations**:

(a) **Capacity-building for women's leadership at all levels, for community and professional women**;

(b) **Multisectoral approaches, to meet women's needs**;

(c) **Gender-mainstreaming skills and expertise within all forest-related institutions, including universities, international organizations, national forest departments and ministries**;

(d) **Pilot projects and case studies, to document the positive impacts of engaging women in poverty-addressing sustainable forest management initiatives**;

(e) **Resources to strengthen women's capacity-building initiatives. These programmes are currently handicapped by grossly inadequate resources**;

(f) **A gender mainstreaming support group of the women major group, to provide technical support in gender mainstreaming in forestry to Member States**;

**(g) Allocations in the Secretariat's budget, specifically dealing with gender equality and women's participation, to assure that policy directives are implemented;**

**(h) Partnerships between Governments and civil society and with regional and global organizations, specialized in gender mainstreaming, to assure the implementation of gender-sensitive sustainable forest management initiatives. Pilot projects and case studies are still needed to document the positive impacts of engaging women in poverty-addressing sustainable forest management initiatives.**